

# IN THE EASTER PLAYS

By LAWRENCE REAMER.

THERE could be no greater tribute to the success of Miss George's scheme at the Playhouse than her own popularity with the public. She has never been more applauded than as the heroine of "Captain Brassbound's Conversion." Indeed, she is called before the curtain at the close of nearly every performance, which is a remarkable demonstration of approval from the fickle New York public. It must be borne in mind that Miss George has played five different roles. She has been in every play given at the Playhouse this season.

It only takes a sight of an actress more than once or twice in a year to satisfy the New York public thoroughly. Audiences are "full up" of a play after she has been before them two or three plays. That has always been one obstacle to the success of the stock company system in New York. The unfortunates at the New Theatre ceased to interest their audiences after a short time. The subscribers soon wearied of their looks and their personalities and saw the scheme abandoned without regret. To see an actress once in a season in a successful play is about the most that the public here can stand of its dearly beloved favorites.

So it is a credit to Miss George that the play which closes her season is not only the most successful of all of them but has made her more popular than ever with her public. Large audiences are to be found every night at the Playhouse and their delight in the admirable performance is secondary to the friendly enthusiasm they feel for the actress who not only provides this excellent entertainment but gives such a charming portrayal of *Lady Cecil*. Miss George has accomplished a wonder. She has kept her public throughout a whole season at varied roles and she has, moreover, shattered the tradition that an actress gets on the nerves of the New Yorkers who are compelled to witness her more than once a twelvemonth.

Does the New York theatregoer love a tale? The success of Sir Herbert Beerbaum Tree at the New Amsterdam Theatre has suggested that possibility. He made two efforts in the past to win the New York public. It was always easy, however, when it was a question of looking to Tree in spite of the weary of his performance and the unquestionably artistic standard of all that he did. So, for many years, Sir Herbert gave up all hope of conquering this stubborn public. But he returned to the task at the psychological moment. He had been created a peer and the celebration of the Shakespearean tercentenary was at hand. There were moving pictures to be made in the West and the actor, after being there for a while, returned to New York.

In the name of art a fund was raised for him and the season at the New Amsterdam Theatre began with a revival of a play that had never been staged here. But from the first night the popular success of the production was never in question. "Credit" divided between the Shakespearean flood of popularity and Mr. Tree's "Sir" is the success of a professional specialist on theatrical subjects.

Is that question solved? Does the New York public know whether an actor has a title or not or care a rap about it? If he has? When Sir Johnstone Elmer Robertson won the people of this country as a tragedian he had a title. But he was a

## SHAKESPEARE WEEK.

**SUNDAY**—Bramhall Playhouse. Scenes from "The Taming of the Shrew," "Hamlet" and "Julius Caesar" will be enacted each evening throughout the week by the Bramhall Players, a part of the Shakespeare Festival celebration. Among those who will take part are Margaret Campbell, Edna Archer, Crawford, Daniel Hope and Butler Davenport.

**Cathedral of St. John the Divine**—A special service in honor of Shakespeare will be held this afternoon at 3 o'clock. Addresses will be made by Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, Bishop Greer and Sir Herbert Tree.

A tablet to commemorate the founding of the New York Shakespeare Society will be unveiled at noon to-day at the corner of Madison avenue and Forty-fifth street. Addresses will be made by Henry Clives and Dr. Appleton Morgan, president of the society.

**MONDAY**—Hotel Biltmore—The Professional Woman's Bazaar will give a Shakespearean Ball. Masque in aid of their addresses Emergency Fund for needy professionals, to-night at 8:20 o'clock.

Neighborhood Playhouse—A special matinee will be given to-day at which scenes from "The Merchant of Venice," "Romeo and Juliet" and "Twelfth Night" will be enacted.

Beginning at the Hudson Guild, 430 West Twenty-seventh street, tonight under the auspices of the Chelsea Neighborhood Association, a performance of "King Lear" will be given. At various other places in Chelsea Village throughout the week the play will be repeated.



MARGARET ANGLIN, IN "A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE"

plain "Mr." when he had the remarkable run of "The Passing of the Third Floor Back" at the Maxine Elliott Theatre. Before he could draw a corporal's guard, however, to witness his beautiful and unique performance in "Hamlet" he had won his title. In the case of Sir Henry Irving there could be no ground for believing that his title had the slightest influence in forming the affectionate regard which the American public held for him.

But it is impossible to get away altogether from the idea that in the case of Sir Herbert it may, well, it may have helped some. Why did a public which had most composedly rejected the actor on all his previous efforts to win acceptance here, suddenly swarm to see him?

How agreeable it is that the standards of success are gradually changing! For how many years was every opera judged by "The Merry Widow"? After Lehar's work had created a sensation over the country, ash barrels, electric signs, billboards and other means of lofty literary expressions bore such moving legends as "A Second Merry Widow," "Better Than 'The Merry Widow,'" or the more self-contained comparison, "Good as 'The Merry Widow.'" Of course none of these things was true. There never has been an opera equal to Lehar's work. And at last there has ceased to be the mention of that little masterpiece whenever a new opera is produced.

Then there was "Bunty Pulls the Strings." Not only were various works said to be equal to this little play of Moffatt's, but every playwright who wrote a play with any national character immediately clutched at Mr. Moffatt's coat-tails and swore that he had done for the country of his play what "Bunty" had accomplished for Scotland. Brighouse in "Robison's Choice" had done for provincial life in England what "Bunty" did for Scotland. Then there were half a dozen Irish *Bunties*. The most ridiculous of all of them is "The Melody of Youth," which is a perfectly conventional specimen of Irish comedy of the school which was founded by Boucicault. Of course Mr. Tynan is not a Boucicault and that may account for various differences between the play and the works of the great Irish playwright. But "The Melody of Youth" attractive as it may be to the adolescent, might as well be modelled in style on another famous Scotch play called "Macbeth" as on "Bunty."

But there is no reason for losing courage. "The Merry Widow" as a standard has passed. Probably "Bunty Pulls the Strings" has also been heard from for the last time.

Much is read concerning the superior diction of the English actor. He is supposed to speak much more correctly and with greater cultivation than his American colleague. Of course it is only in the manner of his delivery that this superiority has been observed. All numbers, whatever their nationality may be, only utter the words which the dramatist has written for them. Of course there are various impressions on this subject. Once a Western admirer of the theatre's art had the privilege of being introduced to John Drew, for which he might have been grateful. But he wasn't. He had seen Mr. Drew previously in a comedy by Maughan or some other London sentimentalist. Mr. Drew talked his customary well bred conversation of a man of the world.

"It was a shock to me," the theatre lover said. "Mr. Drew had been so witty all through the play. But he didn't say much out of the ordinary at supper. Any man could talk like he did."

Of course it might be said that there you have it. After all, the poor playwright does help the actor in one little way or another. But nobody could blame him for the diction of his instruments, the players. It is a lucky thing for more playwrights than one that they have not been responsible for the style in which some of their interpreters spoke this spring.

There was one play, for instance, with three English actors in its va-



NATALIE ALT, IN "COME TO BOHEMIA"

rious scenes. One could not say that their delivery was Cockney. It was not always that kind of speech. But it was far from the utterance of Englishmen of cultivation or social experience. It was in nearly every case distinctly middle class or plebeian. They happened in this play to be by way of knowing and speaking differently. Nothing got to the public, however, but the evident lack of polish about the manner in which these players delivered the speeches of the author. So the time has come to put an end to the praise of the way in which English actors speak on the stage. We have seen enough of them this season to settle the tradition concerning their elegance of delivery.

When they are not revelling in every shade of accent from Bow Bells to the Mile End road, they grow intensely Cockney. A revival of a popular English comedy by a company of British players was interesting chiefly from the manner in which the actors spoke. Had the programme contained a challenge the purpose of this kind of stage man might have been understood.

"The actors are speaking the English language," the note might have said, "but we defy you to discover what they are talking about. Don't look for the first time in case of fire, but listen for the first word you can understand and hang on to it. It may be your turn to understand the plot."

Luckily it was an old play and many persons knew the story. So it was rather a diverting process to the few who wandered into the theatre to watch the players and wonder if they were enjoying their complete exclusiveness. The men in the play at least never let the public, the stage and limited public that heard them into their secret. They had it all to themselves.

What a chance there would have been this year for a *Lady Macbeth* really capable of playing the part to have distinguished herself! How curious it seems when an effort has been made to do something

## THE HIPPODROME.

Two performances will be given here to-day for the benefit of the Permanent Blind Relief War Fund. In the afternoon the programme will be designed to appeal to children. So among the sights to be seen will be "Peter Rabbit in Dreamland," scenes from "Hip, Hip, Hooray!" Sousa and Edward Derr.

Billie Burke will cease to be a queen of the movies for a single evening and among the other actors to be seen at the evening performance will be Madge Kennedy, Clara Kimball Young, Julia Sanderson, Donald Brian, Charles Cherry, Laura Cowey, Emma Whelen, Kenneth Hill, Gail Kane, Alice Brady, George Cohan, Grace La Rue, Sam Bernard, the Dolly Sisters, Ine Claire, Ann Pennington, Maurice and Walton, Nora Bayes, Jack Wilson and Claire Rochester. Then the company from the Ziegfeld Follies will also appear.

really worth while in a dramatic way that somebody altogether incapable of performing what is required gets the opportunity? Think for instance that a *Lady Macbeth* Nance O'Neil would have made. With her rich dramatic nature and the genuine power to denote the tragic mood, she would have been a stirring and moving figure of the thane's wife. Then Phyllis Neilson-Terry, who reads Shakespeare more delightfully and more dramatically than any other actress on the stage to-day, would have been not only a dominating personage in the play but she would have been beautiful. Blanche Bates would have been engrossing in the part and might have played it better than any of those who have been named. But assuredly Mrs. Fiske would, of all the actresses of the American stage who may be mentioned in connection with the part, have interested her public as no other woman. But it was of

## THE "TEMPEST" TO BE SEEN

A special story on the light thrown on the stage management of Shakespeare's plays by the production of "The Tempest" appears on Page 5 of this issue. The author is John Corbin, one of the producers of the forthcoming revival.

"The Tempest" which the Drama Society is reviving at the Century, will hold its dress rehearsal this evening, the exact date of Shakespeare's death, 400 years ago. The occasion will be a commemoration of the fulfillment of his life work, and members of the society and its guests will be present. The first public performance will be tomorrow.

Though one of the most valued of Shakespeare's plays in the library, "The Tempest" is comparatively little known on the stage. In the past forty-seven years it has had only a single production in New York, that of Augustin Daly in 1877. In 1889 it was selected for the opening of the Grand Opera House, the rather pretentious venture with which Jim Fisk was associated. In 1904 Barton produced it, and in 1898 it was given for Diaghilev's benefit. Besides these four, the only production of the nineteenth century was at the Bowery Theatre in 1835, where it was made into opera.

The reason for this neglect, the Drama Society believes, lies in the fact that of all Shakespeare's plays "The Tempest" suffers most severely in adapting it to the picture stage. Being a thing of gossamer, of airy phantasies and elusive charm, it is peculiarly sensitive to the severe cuts and the transpositions of scenes which are a consequence of what is called the "production." And the "production" of "The Tempest" is heavier than that of any of the familiar comedies and tragedies— heavier in fact than the production of any other play of Shakespeare's. The opening scene, which is the basis of the main dramatic interest, calls for the picturing of nothing less than the ocean with a storm tossed ship on it, and the scene at the close of the action represents the vanishing "into thin air" of a masque of a dozen "sprites." In compassing these spectacles or in avoiding them, the poet, as the Drama Society believes, has been well nigh obliterated. The present production aims to re-



KATHARINE KAELED IN "BEAU BRUMMEL"

course not to be given to any of these actresses— which perhaps was not so important after all, since the play was acted for such a brief period.

per's spirits vanished, leaving "not a rack behind." It does not promise any more of stage mechanism. It is an attempt, in fact, to accept what will doubtless appear to be crutches. Symbolically the old stage was symbolic— purposely leaving much to the spectator's imagination. But a full text will be presented in rapid continuity with all necessary action and all "practical" appliances. Chief reliance will be placed on Shakespeare's narrative and characters and on the suggestive power of his poetry, in a word on the art of the dramatist and of the actor.

The producing staff includes four of the classic staff of the New Theatre, in general charge of the production, Frederick Stanhope is manager, and Elliott Schenck has written the music and will conduct it. The only new member is Thomas D. Beattie, who is set director. The production is an outgrowth of that of "The Winter's Tale" at the New Theatre. That was undertaken mainly as an experiment in archaology, but to the surprise of all the old stage developed popular and artistic qualities which no one dreamed were in it. "The Winter's Tale" was the most instant and striking success of all the classical productions in the life of the institution.

The company of "The Tempest" includes four of the New Theatre company: Mr. Calvert as Prospero, Cecil Yapp as Ferdinand, Reginald Ebor as the Banquo, a part which has been always been cut, and Henry Stanford as Ferdinand. Miranda and Ariel are played by Jane Grey and Edna Marlow. Other members of the company are George Hunsell as Stephano, Walter Hampden as Caliban, Edwin Montant as Alonso, Frank Westerton as Trinculo and Frederick Emelton as Gonzalo.

## THE DRAMA OF LABOR.

It has profoundly impressed an American Playwright.

Elmer Reizenstein, author of "Don Quixote," believes he has found material for one of the coming great American dramas. He is responsible for the dramatic episodes of the Rand School Labor Pageant, which will be performed on April 28 and 29 and May 1 at Central Opera House, Sixty-seventh street and Third avenue, showing the results of the laboring class in various periods of history.

"I think the labor movement when seen in perspective furnishes the most dramatic material in modern life," he said the other day. "The detail, the organization of unions, the walking delegations, the political wire pulling, may seem sordid to the observer and uninteresting to the workman at the time, but the drama of a great strike may be

lost in the daily routine of the soap kitchen. But when we see this drama as a whole, as it is played on an international scale from decade to decade it dwarfs all the other dramas we know. It is this dramatic vista which I have tried to show in the various episodes of the Labor Pageant, from the revolt of the makers of bricks in ancient Egypt to the storming of the Bastille in the French Revolution.

"And in the acting of this pageant," he continued, "there will probably be a certain dramatic quality which we miss in the ordinary play. The 400 people of a dozen nationalities who will enter the various episodes will be in their imaginations, living through exactly such a conflict as they believe they are actually engaged in in their daily lives. When they storm the Bastille in their weekly rehearsals after a day's work in shop or factory you can see that they are not pretending. The thing is real to them; they feel they are enacting a drama of today, only

transferred back a quarter of a century." It is evident from Mr. Reizenstein's enthusiasm on the subject of labor as a dramatic theme that he has not taken a course in sociology at Columbia University in vain.

Arnold Daly will play Richard Mansfield's old part in "Beau Brummel," which he revived at the Century Theatre on Monday. He will be assisted by a company including Katharine Kaelred, Eva Denison, E. J. Ratcliffe, Stanley Dark, William Raymond, Edgar Norton and others.

Margaret Anglin will have Holbrook Blinn as her chief support when she revives Oscar Wilde's famous comedy "A Woman of No Importance" at the Fulton Theatre on Monday. She will appear with her are Orina Nasmith, Lionel Pope, Richard Temple, George Le Guere and Anne Hughes.

Sir Herbert Beerbaum Tree will give his matinee for the British Red Cross at the New Amsterdam Theatre on Monday. He will appear successively as *Macbeth*, *Talbot*, *Richard III* and *Malvolio* in "Twelfth Night," the leading the support of three leading ladies in "Coriolanus" Collier, Phyllis Neilson-Terry and Edith Wynne Mathisson. In addition Lyn Harding and many of the leading members of his present company in "King Henry VIII" will assist. David Bispham will appear in a musical scene called "The Seven Ages of Man" from "As You Like It," accompanied by the company, and Sir Herbert will also have the support of several other distinguished artists in the extracts, including Laurette Taylor. Matinee rehearsals of "The Merchant of Venice" with Miss Elsie Ferguson as *Portia*, Lyn Harding as *Antonio* and Sir Herbert Tree as *Shylock* are proceeding apace for early production.

The first of the summer musical comedies, "Come to Bohemia" will be seen on next Thursday at the Maxine Elliott Theatre. It is the initial production of the Savoyard Producing Company, organized recently for the presentation of operetta and light musical plays, solely by American authors and composers.

The book and lyrics of the new piece were written by George S. Chappell and the music by Kenneth M. Marchion of this city. Both Mr. Chappell and Mr. Marchion have made the Bohemian life of the student their theme and have had their scenes in the Latin Quarter of Paris, where they lived while attending the Ecole des Beaux Arts. The first act is a copy of the same studio that they shared and the lease of which they still retain. The other scenes, the Bal des Quatre Arts, the Rue Vaugouard, the Theatre Gaite de la Montparnasse and the Cafe des Deux Marsou, all within a stone's throw of this studio, have been faithfully reproduced to convey the genuine atmosphere of the quarter.

The story of "Come to Bohemia" is the romance of a young singer, *Madeleine Perrier*, and a young composer, *Jacques Le Grand*, whose father, a legitimate tragedian in the movies, pining for a chance to use his voice, seeks relief from their poverty by engaging her to the foppish Count de la

stage in two weeks' engagement in "If I Were King."

THE Drama League is to celebrate the tercentenary of Shakespeare's death by a production of "The Tempest" at the Century Theatre. John Corbin, Louis Calvert, Frederick Stanhope, Elliott Schenck—these are the heads of the departments who will receive this rarely seen play. Louis Calvert, Jane Grey, Edna Marlow, these are some of the actors who are to be seen in the revival.

THE Plays that continue in New York are "The Fear Market" at the Comedy Theatre, "Ramona" at the Forty-fourth Street Theatre, "Rio Grande" at the Empire Theatre, "The Heart of Wexona" at the Lyceum Theatre, "The Boomerang" at the Biltmore Theatre, "Common Clay" at the Republic Theatre, "Hit the Trail Holiday" at the Harris Theatre, "Just a Woman" at the Forty-eighth Street Theatre, "The Cinderella Man" at the Hudson Theatre, "Captain Brassbound's Conversion" at the Playhouse, "Treasure Island" at the Punch and Judy Theatre, "The Melody of Youth" at the Criterion Theatre, "A Woman of No Importance" at the Fulton Theatre, "The Great Lover" at the Longacre Theatre, "The Co-respondent" at the Booth Theatre, "Erastus Susan" at the Gaiety Theatre, "Fair and Warmer" at the Eltinge Theatre, "Beau Brummel" at the Cort Theatre, "Henry VIII" at the New Amsterdam Theatre, "A King of No-where" at the Thirty-ninth Street Theatre and the Washington Square Players at the Bantbox Theatre.

The musical plays are "Very Good Eddie" at the Princess Theatre, "Pom-Pom" at the Cohan Theatre, "Katinka" at the Lyric Theatre, "The Blue Paradise" at the Casino Theatre, "Sybil" at the Liberty Theatre, "The Cohan Revue 1910" at the Astor Theatre and "Robinson Crusoe, Jr." at the Winter Garden.

The Hippodrome is open with Sousa's Band, "Hip Hip Hooray" and "Flirting at St. Moritz," a big spectacular offering.

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In the cast are Natalie Alt, William Danforth, Walter Denval, Fritz Williams, Domman Miles, Clara Palmer, Marie Hudson, Olive Reeves Smith, Fred A. Rice, Alva May, Woods, Gilbert Clayton, Percival Woodley, Paley Noon and Richard Hall. Theodore Stier will direct the orchestra.

Tonight the Neighborhood Players will give the second performance of their last production this season. They will be seen in a bill of four one act plays, which are as follows: "A Night at an Inn" by Lord Dunsany, an unpublished play by the poet; "The Merry Widow" by Franz Lehár, which has never before been produced in America.

"A Marriage Proposal," a farce by Anton Tchekoff, one of the few plays which Tcheff knew Russian dramatist conceived in lighter vein. It is thoroughly Russian in spirit. The class in stage decoration, under the direction of Mrs. M. J. Zimmern, has designed and executed the scenery and costumes. These have been done in the new impressionistic manner based on Russian designs.

"With the Current" by Sholem Asch, a young Jewish playwright of New York. This play has been translated from the Yiddish and is now given in three representations in English. It is a study of the revolt of a young Russian Jew against the conditions imposed by traditions that have become meaningless to the younger generation.

"The Price of Gold" by Harold Brighouse, a grimly humorous study of life in a coal mining community. The play was presented by the Neighborhood Players two years ago and is now revived by request.

E. H. Sothern will begin on next Saturday night at the Shubert Theatre the engagement which marks his unique method of retirement from the stage. He will play for two weeks "If I Were King" by Justin H. McCarthy, in which he has had his greatest success outside of his Shakespearean repertoire. The other receipts of this engagement will be donated by Mr. Sothern to the Actors Fund.

It was twenty years ago that Mr. Sothern first produced this play, *Gezella Loftus*, Suzanne Sheldon, George Wilson and William Harris were in the original performance. The two actors will be seen in the present revival. Alexandra Carlisle will play the leading role of Suzanne with Virginia Hammond also in the cast. This engagement will mark the complete retirement of Mr. Sothern from the stage.

## THE PLAYS THAT LAST.

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## THE PLAYS OF EASTER WEEK

MONDAY—CENTURY THEATRE—"The Tempest," by the Drama Society.  
NEW AMSTERDAM THEATRE—Matinee for the Red Cross, with Sir Herbert Tree in four different roles.  
CORT THEATRE—Arnold Daly in a revival of Clyde Fitch's "Beau Brummel."  
FULTON THEATRE—Margaret Anglin in a revival of Oscar Wilde's "A Woman of No Importance."  
THURSDAY—MAXINE ELLIOTT THEATRE—"Come to Bohemia," a comic opera of life in the Latin Quarter of Paris, by George Chappell and Kenneth Marchion.  
SATURDAY—SHUBERT THEATRE—E. H. Sothern says farewell to the stage in two weeks' engagement in "If I Were King."



Jane Grey



Edna Marlow, IN THE TEMPEST AT THE CENTURY THEATRE